

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claim 14 is amended and new claim 34 is added. Accordingly, claims 14-34 are pending in this application, claims 15-17 and 23-25 being withdrawn from further consideration. It is respectfully submitted that new claim 34 reads on the elected species. No new matter is added.

As discussed with the Examiner in connection with the March 16, 2004 Advisory Action, Applicant understands that the Examiner requires further clarification of the "means" recited in claim 14.

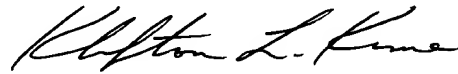
Accordingly, claim 14 is amended to recite that the locking means comprises two diametrically opposite lugs formed in a wall of the tubular sheath, as described, for example, in the specification on page 7, line 28 - page 8, line 8. Further, the paragraph beginning on line 35 of page 7 is amended to avoid potential confusion introduced by the March 5, 2004 Amendment After Final Rejection. Because the specification describes the locking means as comprising "firstly a seat 4E . . . and secondly retractable means for clamping," and describes the retractable means for clamping as being "formed by two tabs 5 that are substantially diametrically opposite," the locking means is described as comprising the two tabs, as recited in claim 14.

The release means described in the specification comprises the cap. However, it should be understood that the release means may differ from the cap described in the specification. Claim 14 is written such that the release means may or may not comprise the cap. New dependent claim 34 specifies that the release means comprises the cap.

In view of the foregoing clarification and the arguments presented in the March 5, 2004 Amendment After Final Rejection, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 14-34 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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WPB:KLK/kzb

Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time
Request for Continued Examination
Amendment Transmittal

Date: May 6, 2004

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